COUNCIL ON ALBERTA TEACHING STANDARDS

COATS ANNUAL REPORT

September, 1989

COUNCIL ON ALBERTA TEACING STANDARDS

Year End Report

August 1988 - August 1989

Introduction

The Council on Alberta Teaching Standards held monthly meetings throughout the period of September 1988 through June 1989. During that time, the Council focused attention on the following areas: teacher preparation/education, teacher evaluation, teacher excellence, the Practice Review of Teachers Regulation, certification matters and a succession model.

Following the Council's deliberations and appropriate consultations with members of the education community, recommendations were forwarded to the Minister of Education for his consideration.

Teacher Preparation

In the fall of 1988, the Teacher Preparation Sub-Committee resumed its consideration of a paper that outlined a conceptual framework for teacher education. The sub-Committee determined that a discussion of teacher education should include a divergence of ideas drawn from a number of perspectives.

The Sub-Committee recommended to the Council that the stakeholder groups be invited to participate in a forum to discuss teacher education. The Sub-Committee proposed that the forum be orientated to the future and conceptualize teacher education as being career-long learning for teachers. The Council approved the proposal, in principle, and asked the Sub-Committee to prepare a program, budget and workplan for the Council's consideration early in 1989.

In the spring of 1989, the Council approved the Sub-Committee's program, budget and workplan. Letters of intent were sent to the Deans of the Faculties of Education in Alberta and to the heads of the stakeholder organizations. The letters invited participation, by a number of persons from each organization, in a Forum on Future Teacher Education in Alberta, April 23-25, 1990. The organizations also were asked to provide their reactions to a proposed agenda. Invitations were sent to Honourable Jim Dinning (Minister of Education) and Honourable John Gogo (Minister of Advanced Education). The Ministers were asked to address the Forum and, if their schedules allowed, to join in the discussions.

The reactions of the organizations and Ministers to the proposal were positive. However, the proposed April 23-25, 1990, date was reported to be in conflict with a number of already scheduled events. As well, participating organizations made suggestions about organizational representation and the nature of the proposed Forum which, subsequently, were considered by the Council.

In light of the reported conflict of dates, the Council decided to defer the proposed April 23-25, 1990, date. The Council also decided to strike a Teacher Education Sub-Committee chaired by Dr. Bill Duke. The Sub-Committee would include representation from each of the organizations invited to participate in the Forum.

The Council asked that the Teacher Education Sub-Committee meet in September, 1989, to discuss and to recommend to Council:

1) a new date for the Forum on Future Teacher Education in Alberta; and
2) how the proposed program may be enhanced to better meet the Council's objectives

Teacher Evaluation

During its deliberation of alternate courses of action, the Teacher Evaluation Sub-Committee determined that there does not appear to be a succinct body of data that describes current teacher evaluation policy, processes and practices in Alberta. The Sub-Committee agreed that such body of data would be useful to the Council and also to Alberta Education and the field.

Given the potential scope of the study, the Sub-Committee sought the co-operation of Alberta Education's Planning and Policy Secretariat which also has interests in the area of teacher evaluation policy. Together, a proposal for a joint study by the Council on Alberta Teaching Standards and the Planning and Policy Secretariat was prepared and recommended to the Council.

The proposal suggested that the study be undertaken in two stages. Phase one would involve hiring a contractor to assist in the development of a research design and the research questions appropriate to the interests of both the -d6u"nc-il and the Planning and -Policy 'Secretariat." - Phase two of the study would be the development and implementation of the study.

The proposal also called for the establishment of a Steering Committee comprised of representatives of the stakeholder organizations, the Council and Alberta Education. The Council approved the recommendation and asked David Jeary to serve as its representative on the Steering Committee.

Specifications were written and advertisements were placed calling for proposals from qualified parties interested in undertaking phase one of the study. Western Management Consultants was selected to develop a research design and the research questions for delivery in June, 1989. Representatives of Western Management Consultants met with the Steering Committee first to discuss the study and to seek assistance in refining their proposal and, then, throughout the length of the project to seek further assistance and direction.

The contractor's report was received by the Council at its June, 1989, meeting. This report currently is under review by officials in Alberta Education to determine the nature and scope of phase two of the research.

Teacher Excellence

The Council completed the development of a proposal to recognize excellence in teaching, a process that included consultation and input from the stakeholder groups. The proposal recommended to the Minister of Education suggested that a maximum of 20 Awards be offered at the provincial level and an unspecified number of Awards be offered at the local level.

In the Fall of 1988, the Minister approved the development and implementation of the Excellence in Teaching Awards Program.

A Program Coordinator was recruited and selected to work with the Council and the Teacher Excellence Sub-Committee, the Communications Branch and the Public Affairs Bureau to develop: advertisements for daily and weekly newspapers; brochures, posters, nomination/endorsement packages and a program guide; the Award presentation ceremony; and the Award certificates/appropriate tokens.

A Nomination Review Committee was established to review the nominations and recommend the local and provincial Award recipients, and at the invitation of the Minister, the stakeholder groups appointed their representatives.

In the Spring of 1989, the Minister advertised in the daily and weekly newspapers in Alberta requesting nominations for Excellence in Teaching Awards.

Nomination packages, brochures and posters were distributed to the stakeholder groups, school jurisdictions, libraries and the Regional Offices of Education. As well, nomination packages were forwarded directly to persons responding to the Minister's advertisement.

Over 250 complete nomination packages were received. The Nomination Review Committee met over a full week during the Summer of 1989 to review all completed nomination packages and to prepare a list of recommended local and provincial Excellence in Teaching Award recipients for consideration by and the approval of the Minister.

Throughout this time, the Council worked to develop and prepare certificates and commemorative pins appropriate for presentation to Award recipients at the local and provincial levels.

The Excellence in Teaching Awards ceremony will be held at the Calgary Convention Centre on November 4, 1989. The development of the ceremony is ongoing.

Practice Review of Teachers Regulation

Eighteen telephone inquiries seeking specific information about the Practice Review of Teachers Regulation procedures were received over this reporting period. A record of each inquiry was

kept on file including the name of the person making the inquiry, the nature and details of the inquiry and the information provided.

One practice review case proceeded through to the announcement of the Minister's decision regarding the teacher's certification. The procedures followed were in accordance with the Practice Review of Teachers Regulation. Information from Alberta Social Services about a teacher's teaching in Calgary was received in April 1988.The Registrar consulted with Alberta Education officials and legal counsel to determine appropriate action. Following the receipt of two formal complaints in early June regarding that teacher's teaching, the Registrar determined that the Practice Review of Teachers Regulation should be applied. On June 13, the Registrar directed that a preliminary inquiry be undertaken by a member of the Red Deer Regional Office of Education. Given the complexities of the inquiry and the timing in relation to the school year, the preliminary inquiry was extended to October. On reviewing the report of the preliminary inquiry, the Registrar determined on October 11 that there appeared to be sufficient cause to proceed to a formal investigation and this decision was made known to the relevant parties. In anticipation that a Competency Review Panel may be required to hear this or any other case, a Panel and an alternative Panel were established in November. The formal investigation was completed early in December, and the Registrar's decision to proceed to a Competency Review Panel hearing was made known to the relevant parties over December 5-20, as was the date and location of the hearing which had been determined by the Panel's Chairman. Following an orientation for Panel members, the hearing took place in Calgary February 7-8, 1989. During the hearing, the Registrar presented evidence and witnesses testified in regards the teacher's skill/competency. The teacher chose not to attend, nor to be represented by counsel or an agent, nor to present a defence or evidence or witnesses of any kind. Following the hearing, the Panel deliberated and wrote its decision and recommendations which were presented to the Registrar in late March whereupon copies were forwarded to the appropriate parties. On June 13, the Chairman of the Council announced the Minister's decision to suspend the teacher's certification until the teacher had satisfactorily completed a supervised practical teaching experience of one year in an Alberta school. Subsequently, members of the Council and the Executive Secretary to the Council were active in communicating relevant information to the media and other interested parties.

At the end of August, 20 practice review files were on hand. Of these:

1 file was active in that the Regulation was being applied;
2 files had the potential for further action;
4 files were pending the completion of other authorities' activities; and
13 were closed because: the Regulation had been applied, in full; no further action was to be undertaken; and any relevant periods for appeals had elapsed.

The Council was active in reviewing the Practice Review of Teachers Regulation with the assistance of the Legislative Services Branch and the Attorney General's Department. The principal foci of the review were in: ensuring internal consistency both within the Regulation and with the new School Act and other legislation; and in matters regarding communicating recommendations and decisions. Proposed changes to the Regulation will be recommended to the Minister of Education for his consideration and approval.

Inservice education continued to be developed and provided for Regional Office of Education personnel. The Council's administrative staff was active in:

developing materials for distribution and informing Regional Office personnel about administrative guidelines for appropriately conducting preliminary inquiries and formal investigations;

developing skill-enhancing programs in the areas of mediation, investigation and teacher evaluation; and

updating Regional Office personnel on the nature of inquiries and complaints related to teaching practice and the response or outcomes of such inquiries or complaints, as was appropriate.

Certification Matters

The Council deliberated and sought advice from members of the education community regarding specific issues related to the certification of teachers in Alberta. Recommendations were forwarded to the Minister of Education and are noted below.

In summary, the Council recommended that:

the Early Childhood Services Diploma no longer be a requirement for employment, by a teacher, in provincially approved Early Childhood Service programs; and

for teachers not subject to provisions of the Teaching Profession Act teaching certificates not be issued to or be withdrawn from persons who have been convicted of indictable criminal offences, at the discretion of the Minister of Education.

Succession Model

The Council determined that the time and circumstances were opportune to consider how the membership on Council could be renewed. In order to maintain continuity, the Council recommended to the Minister that the membership change should occur in two stages. The Council proposed that three of the five teacher members together with the representatives of the Alberta School Trustees' Association and the Universities Coordinating Council would change in September, 1989. In September 1990, the remaining two teacher members and the public member together with the representatives of the Alberta Teachers' Association and the Conference of Alberta School Superintendents would change.

The Minister accepted these recommendations and in late Spring, 1989, letters were sent to the Alberta School Trustees' Association and the Universities Coordinating Council asking for the names of nominees of which one would be selected by the Minister to represent each organization. Advertisements were placed in the daily press across the province asking for the nomination of teachers for selection to the Council by the Minister.

A committee was established to review the nominations for teacher members to the Council. A list of names from each of the six education zones was prepared and submitted to the Minister.

The announcement of the Council's new members was made in September, 1989.

The new members of the Council attended an orientation session prior to the

Council's first meeting of 1989-98.